Pretty Unusual follows grandam to El Encino glory

by Rommy Faversham

The $150,000 El Encino Stakes (G2) on January 17 at Santa Anita Park proved to be a family affair, especially for winning filly Pretty Unusual and her popular co-owner veteran actor Jack Klugman.

The aptly named four-year-old overcame odds of 29.70-to-1 as she split horses in midstretch en route to an impressive 1¼-length victory over 9-to-5 favorite Stardom Bound, the 2008 champion two-year-old filly.

A bay Unusual Heat filly, Pretty Unusual completed the 1¹⁄₁₆-mile race in 1:43.72 on the synthetic Pro-Ride surface. She was bred in California by David Abrams and Madeline Auerbach.

The El Encino was the first graded stakes win for Pretty Unusual, who captured the Melair Stakes on the California Gold Rush program at Hollywood Park on April 25. She improved to three wins and two seconds from ten starts and boosted her earnings to $249,632.

Pretty Unusual is campaigned by Auerbach, Marie Goda, and Klugman.

Perhaps best known for his starring roles in television's "The Odd Couple" and "Quincy M.E.", Klugman also was the breeder and owner of our subject's first two dams.

Twenty years ago, Pretty Unusual's grandam, Akinemod, annihilated a field of peers in the 1990 El Encino when she scored by 18 lengths—one of the widest margins of stakes victory in track history.

David Abrams' brother, Barry, has been responsible for training a good portion of Unusual Heat's top offspring, including this one.

Pretty Unusual is one of two winners from as many starters out of the winning Siphon (Brz) mare Sci Fi Kin. She also is the dam of a pair of full siblings to Pretty Unusual—an unraced three-year old filly named Jax El as well as a yearling colt.

PRETTY UNUSUAL

Benoit & Associates photo

Pretty Unusual hails from the eighth crop of Unusual Heat, who stands at Old English Rancho in Sanger, California.

It is increasingly evident that no sire—local or otherwise—has benefitted more from California racing's wholesale switch to synthetic surfaces than this Nureyev stallion.

The Golden State's leading turf sire since 2004, Unusual Heat has gone on to prove himself as a leading source of winners on all four of California's all-weather surfaces.

After setting the progeny earnings record of $5,827,513 for a California stallion in 2008, Unusual Heat collected his second consecutive state sire title in 2009 with progeny earnings totaling $5,184,194.

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Pretty Unusual, b. f., 2006

Unusual Heat 90 448 fls, 24 SWs SI 1.89 DI=1.62	Nureyev 77 2 wins, $42,522 Champion 786 fls, 137 SWs SI 4.73 DI=2.83	Northern Dancer 61 635 fls, 147 SWs SI 5.82 DI=3.00	Nearctic 54	=Nearco (Ity) 35 *Lady Angela 44
			Natalma 57	Native Dancer 50 Almahmoud 47
		Special 69 9 fls, 3 SWs DI=1.52	*Forli 63	=Aristophanes (GB) 48 =Trevisa (Arg) 51
			Thong 64	Nantallah 53 *Rough Shod II 44
	Rossard (Den) 80 14 wins, $202,858 Champion 13 fls, 1 SW DI=2.20	=Glacial (Den) 66 22 fls, 2 SWs SI 15.94 DI=1.29	=Pardal (Fr) 47	=Pharis II (Fr) 36 =Adargatis (Fr) 31
			=Glacis (Den) 58	=Epigram (GB) 33 =Glamour (GB) 42
		=Peas-Blossom (GB) 68 7 fls, 1 SW DI=1.00	Midsummer Night 57	*Djeddah 45 Night Sound 46
			=Fan Light (GB) 56	*Wilwyn 48 =Light of Day (GB) 39
Sci Fi Kin 99 3 fls, 1 SW DI=2.33	Siphon (Brz) 91 12 wins, $3,136,428, SW 530 fls, 14 SWs SI 1.17 DI=0.60	=Itajara (Brz) 83 225 fls, 15 SWs SI 13.63 DI=0.60	*Felicio 65	=Shantung (Fr) 56 *Fighting Edie 56
			=Apple Honey (Brz) 75	=Falkland (GB) 68 =Irish Song (Brz) 64
		=Ebrea (Brz) 79 11 fls, 1 SW DI=1.18	=Kublai Khan (Arg) 68	=Sideral (Arg) 48 =Fantasista (Arg) 59
			=Resela (Brz) 71	=Svengali (Brz) 53 =Eridan (Brz) 61
	Akinemod 86 6 wins, $231,625, SW 9 fls, 0 SWs DI=3.00	Time to Explode 79 293 fls, 16 SWs SI 1.11 DI=3.00	Explodent 69	Nearctic 54 Venomous 53
			Timely Queen 71	Olden Times 58 Satin Queen 51
		Lady Paese (Fr) 77 6 fls, 2 SWs DI=3.32	Sir Gaylord 59	*Turn-to 51 Somethingroyal 52
			Bel Paese 70	*Forli 63 Nanka 55